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Appl. No. 10/731,683
Amdt. dated October 15, 2007
Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 Expedited Procedure
Examining Group 3735

PATENT

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-19. (canceled)

20. (currently amended) A system for enhancing minimally invasive heart surgery, the system comprising:

at least one retractor device for enhancing access to a patient's heart through a first incision;

a heart stabilizing device having a tissue contacting surface and at least one suction aperture adjacent the surface; and

a first coupling device for coupling with the heart stabilizing device through a second incision at a location on the patient apart from the first incision, the first coupling device comprising:

an elongate shaft having a proximal end, a distal end, and at least one flexible, rigidifying portion having a closed section that can be rigidified by applying suction; and

means for coupling the elongate shaft with the heart stabilizing device adjacent the distal end of the elongate shaft.

21. (original) A system as in claim 20, further comprising:

a heart positioning device having a tissue contacting surface and at least one suction aperture; and

a second coupling device for coupling with the heart positioning device through a third incision at a location on the patient apart from the first and second incisions.

22. (previously presented) A system as in claim 21, wherein the first and second coupling device comprises devices each comprise an elongate shaft having a proximal end, a distal end, and at least one flexible, rigidifying portion that can be rigidified by applying